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## City Statement on Transitioning to By-District Elections

The City Council voted unanimously last night to approve a resolution declaring its intent to transition the City to by-district elections.

On March 15, 2019, the City received a letter from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) alleging a violation of the California Voting Rights Act and demanding that the City move to by-district elections for the City Council. The City currently has an at-large election system, which means that voters across the City can participate in the selection of all four City Council seats and the Mayor's seat. The demand letter from MALDEF claims that the City's current at-large election system dilutes the ability of Latino voters to elect candidates of their choice or otherwise influence the outcome of City Council elections.

Establishing a by-district election system would change the method of voting by physically dividing the City into separate districts, with each district represented by one councilmember who resides in that district and that is selected only by voters of that district.

We want to send a strong message to our community that the City is committed to diversity and inclusion of all people from all backgrounds. As one of the most diverse cities in the State of California, we take pride in recognizing and celebrating diversity. We are also proud of the diverse representation on our City Council, Boards and Commissions and we are thankful to our residents from all backgrounds who step up to civically engage with the City.

With the action taken last night, we have decided to have the conversation with our community on transitioning to by-district elections, which will include conversations about how the district lines should be drawn. The first by-district election will take place during the November 2020 municipal election.

Our transition to by-district elections is not an admission or proof of evidence that our current election system has violated the California Voting Rights Act or any other provision of law.

The City will be carrying on a comprehensive community outreach and transition process over the next 180 days, which will include:

- Hiring a demographer to facilitate the drawing of a new by-district map
- Conducting at least five public hearings to provide the opportunity for community input, draw district boundaries, and adopt an ordinance to transition to district-based elections

A landing page will soon be developed where members of the community can stay informed about the process.

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